

THE SEVEN-FOLD STRUCTURE OF CHRISTIANITY

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John H. Painter

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

THE SEVEN-FOLD STRUCTURE OF CHRISTIANITY.....	1
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
Romans-12 Gifts as a “Door-Opener.”.....	1
What I Found Out About the Gifts.....	1
The Seven Christian Contexts Surrounding the Gifts.....	2
THE CONTEXTS.....	3
FAITH CONTEXT.....	3
TRUTH CONTEXT.....	4
SPIRIT CONTEXT.....	5
POWER CONTEXT.....	6
MINISTRY CONTEXT.....	7
DOCTRINE CONTEXT.....	8
MATURITY CONTEXT.....	9
CONCLUSION.....	10

INTRODUCTION.

Romans-12 Gifts as a “Door-Opener.”

The Romans-12 “charismatic” gifts are the entry point for studies relating one’s life to God’s Will. The seven charismatic gifts, from among which God gifts us individually, apparently determine a whole lot about how we will live our lives, whether “in the Spirit,” or “in the flesh.” That is because the Bible also contains the “inverses” to the Romans-12 gifts in Matthew 15:19. I have labeled those as “character flaws.” These seven “flaws” line up against the Romans-12 gifts, one for one.

What I Found Out About the Gifts.

In Bible studies dating back to 1983, I came to realize that the Romans-12 gifts characterized more than just seven individual gifts. I found that they fit a context which characterizes many different aspects of Christianity, some individual, some corporate. As I found more scriptures that appeared to “harmonize” with the Romans-12 gifts, I used them in teachings (Sunday School and Seminars). When it came time to write the book, I used 23 sets of corresponding scriptures to work out a corporate model for The Church. I had already taught several seminars, using the seven-fold model, so packaging them for the book was not difficult.

The scriptures that fit the same context as the gifts all have one thing in common. They come in sets of seven. We can form a matrix of the sets vertically and their seven elements horizontally. The seven individual elements of each set can then be aligned so that each column defines a “context.” That is, after alignment, all the

elements in one column fit one single context. Not only that, but taken all together, the elements of each column characterize the context of that column. (This is what's called the "hermeneutic spiral.")

After I had done this for 23 scripture sets (not exhaustive, I suppose), I looked for names for each column that would be the name of that context. The names I came to use were FAITH, TRUTH, SPIRIT, POWER, MINISTRY, DOCTRINE, and MATURITY. The Romans-12 gifts fit these seven contexts, as do many other "sevens" in the Bible, both Old-Testament and New-.

The Seven Christian Contexts Surrounding the Gifts.

Because there are seven churches listed in Revelation, and they fit the Gifts contexts, I postulated that the Church of the end-times is seven-fold in its composition. And, it takes all seven parts fully functioning in a local church for that church to be fully effective. Presumably this means that a local church requires individuals from all seven Romans-12 giftings, functioning effectively together, to make the local church fully effective. This led me to characterize each church part, so as to see what a fully functional local church would look like, with respect to individual participation. We can use this characterization to show individuals where they "fit," in Christian ministry, based on their Romans-12 giftings. We can also use these characterizations to show individuals the Christian contexts in which they will be most comfortable. These contexts also make a fine tool for diagnosing churches in trouble.

I'm going to put these contextual characterizations below, in Tables. These tables have been fully fleshed out, here, for the first time.

NOTE: In the "ordinations" of [1 Cor. 12:28] there are eight, of which seven match the Romans 12:6-8 Gifts and the eighth is "tongues." In the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, of [1 Cor. 12:8-10] there are nine, of which seven match the Romans 12:6-8 gifts and the last two are "tongues" and "interpretation."

THE CONTEXTS.

	FAITH CONTEXT	
Grace Gift	Sharing	[Rom. 12:8]
Character Trait	Relief (of those in need)	[2 Pet. 1:5-7]
Character Flaw	Selfishness	[Mat. 15:19]
Manifestation of Jesus	The Lamb - Redeeming	[Heb. 9:14]
New Covenant	Law (Bible) in Mind	[Heb. 8:10-12]
Holy Spirit Gift	Faith	[1 Cor. 12:9]
Holy Spirit Work	Conviction	[John 16:8]
Ministry	Discipling	[Acts 4:32]
Ordination	Helps	[1 Cor. 12:28]
Fellowship of ...	Faith	[Phm. 6]
Church Focus	First Works	[Rev. 2:5]
Church Problem	Backsliding	[Rev. 2:4]
Evil spirit opposing	Antichrist	[1 John 4:3]
Christ Spirit supporting	Faith	[2 Cor. 4:13]
Overcomer's Promise	Salvation	[Rev. 2:7]
David's Doctrine	Seek Forgiveness	[Psalm 51:1-2]
Jesus' Doctrine	Faith	[Heb. 6:1-2]
Apostle's Doctrine	Jesus - Savior	[Acts 2:21-22]
Unity Doctrine	One ... Faith	[Eph. 4:1-6]

The Faith Context:

The Faith Context is all about the first works of Christianity, and who does them. It is about seeing Jesus as the sacrificial Lamb of God, who saves your life by His death, and the conviction that the Holy Spirit brings as a result of that vision. It's about forgiveness, getting it and giving it. It is about salvation through faith, and the sharing of that faith. It is about familiarization with the Bible, and what it says about Jesus. It's about church unity through one common faith.

This context has another side, which includes fleshly or outright demonic aspects. They are sliding back into an unsharing, non-Christian lifestyle, allowing a spirit of unbelief to slip in.

	TRUTH CONTEXT	
Grace Gift	Exhortation	[2 Tim.4:2]
Character Trait	Love (agape – dutiful)	[2 Pet. 1:5-7]
Character Flaw	False Witness	[Mat. 15:19]
Manifestation of Jesus	The Light - Revealing	[John 8:12]
New Covenant	Law in Heart	[Heb. 8:10-12]
Holy Spirit Gift	Discernment	[1 Cor 12:10]
Holy Spirit Work	Renewal	[Tit. 3:5]
Ministry	Witnessing	[1 Tim. 1:16]
Ordination	Guidance	[1 Cor. 12:28]
Fellowship of ...	Light	[2 Cor. 6:14]
Problem	Doctrine	[Rev. 2:41]
Evil spirit opposing	Error	[1 John 4:6]
Christ Spirit supporting	Truth	[1 John 4:6]
Overcomer's Promise	Hidden Manna	[Rev. 2:17]
David's Doctrine	Acknowledge Guilt	[Psalm 51:3-6]
Jesus' Doctrine	Repentance	[Heb. 6:1-2]
Apostle's Doctrine	Jesus – Fulfills Scripture	[Acts 2:25-34]
Unity Doctrine	One ... Baptism	[Eph. 4:1-6]

The Truth Context:

The Truth Context is about witnessing, testifying, and counseling, who does it, and from what basis they do it. It is about seeing Jesus as the Light of God and the Fulfillment of Scripture, our relationship to His death, and the need for us to be baptized into that death. It's about the discernment that the Holy Spirit brings, of spirits, beginning with our own. It's about our hearts and the need for repentance and renewal. It's about not being a "blind guide." It's about seeing the full truth about ourselves, individually and corporately, and then communicating that truth to others. It's about agape love, which is the dutiful kind of love, sometimes "tough love." It's about starting to understand these things in the heart.

This context has another side, which includes fleshly or outright demonic aspects. This concerns giving a false witness about Jesus, wrapped in bad doctrine, flowing from a spirit of error.

	SPIRIT CONTEXT	
Grace Gift	Prophecy	[Mat. 13:16-17]
Character Trait	Love (phileo – God’s family)	[2 Pet. 1:5-7]
Character Flaw	Adultery - Counterfeit Love	[Mat. 15:19]
Manifestation of Jesus	The Mediator - Interceding	[Rev. 8:3]
New Covenant	Jesus, as God to us	[Heb. 8:10-12]
Holy Spirit Gift	Prophecy	[1 Cor. 12:8-10]
Holy Spirit Work	In-Dwelling	[1 Cor. 6:19]
Ministry	Prophet	[Eph. 4:11]
Ordination	Prophet	[1 Cor. 12:28]
Fellowship of ...	Holy Spirit	[2 Cor. 13:14]
Problem	Blasphemy	[Rev. 2:9]
Evil spirit opposing	Divination	[Acts 16:16]
Christ Spirit supporting	Prophecy	[Rev. 19:10]
Overcomer’s Promise	Crown (Victor’s)	[Rev. 2:10]
David’s Doctrine	Cleanse Sin	[Psalm 51:
Jesus’ Doctrine	Judgment	[Heb. 6:1-2]
Apostle’s Doctrine	Jesus – Lord, Anointed One	[Acts 2:36]
Unity Doctrine	One ... Holy Spirit	[Eph. 4:1-6]

The Spirit Context:

The Spirit Context is about things spiritual, commencing with the Holy Spirit and ending with prophecy. It is about seeing Jesus as Mediator between us and God, the Father. No man gets to the Father except through Jesus (*dia* – by way of). It’s about judgment and cleansing in the here and now. It’s about how we talk, about whom we talk, and from whom we talk. It’s about the family kind of love from the heart. It’s about Who the Holy Spirit is and what He really does. It’s about Jesus on us and in us, via the Holy Spirit.

This context has another side, which includes fleshly or outright demonic aspects. This concerns speaking in a way worthless to God, displaying a counterfeit love, flowing from a spirit of divination (*python*). Such speaking defiles one’s body.

	POWER CONTEXT	
Grace Gift	Leadership	[Rom. 12:6-8]
Character Trait	Godliness – Jesus-like	[2 Pet. 1:5-7]
Character Flaw	Undercutting God	[Mat. 15:19]
Manifestation of Jesus	The Bread - Filling	[John 6:35]
New Covenant	Us, as Jesus' people	[Heb. 8:10-12]
Holy Spirit Gift	Miracles	[1 Cor. 12:8-10]
Holy Spirit Work	Filling	[Eph. 5:18]
Ministry	Evangelist	[Eph. 4:11]
Ordination	Miracles	[1 Cor. 12:28]
Fellowship of ...	The Gospel	[Php. 1:5]
Problem	Seduced - Unequal Yoking	[Rev. 2:20]
Evil spirit opposing	Fear	[Rom. 8:15]
Christ Spirit supporting	Power, Love, Sound Mind	[2 Tim. 1:7]
Overcomer's Promise	Authority	[Rev. 2:26]
David's Doctrine	Renew Life	[Psalm 51: 10-12]
Jesus' Doctrine	Resurrection	[Heb. 6:1-2]
Apostle's Doctrine	Jesus – Baptizer in Holy Spirit	[Acts 2: 33]
Unity Doctrine	One ... Lord	[Eph. 4:1-6]

The Power Context:

The Power Context is about God, manifest in the Christian's flesh. It is about Jesus, filling the Christian, via the Holy Spirit. It is about Jesus, operating through the individual Christian, to do His works in the here and now. It's about the "out front" man of God, proclaiming the Gospel and doing miracles. It's about renewing life and raising from the dead, both figuratively and literally. It's about having Jesus' delegated authority. It's about practicing the full Gospel of Christ. It's about acknowledging Jesus as Lord of creation.

This context has another side, which includes fleshly or outright demonic aspects. This concerns the undercutting or undermining of God's authority stemming from being unequally yoked with those subject to a spirit of fear. Such Christians have a form of godliness, but deny the power of God.

	MINISTRY CONTEXT	
Grace Gift	Ministry	[Rom. 12:6-8]
Character Trait	Virtue – valor (manliness)	[2 Pet. 1:5-7]
Character Flaw	Putting Down	[Mat. 15:19]
Manifestation of Jesus	The Word - Washing	[Eph. 5:26]
New Covenant	Seeking God	[Heb. 8:10-12]
Holy Spirit Gift	Healing	[1 Cor. 12:8-10]
Holy Spirit Work	Intercession	[Rom. 8:26]
Ministry	Pastor/Shepherd	[Eph. 4:11]
Ordination	Healing	[1 Cor. 12:28]
Fellowship of ...	Ministry	[2 Cor. 8:4]
Problem	Uncleanness	[Rev. 3:4]
Evil spirit opposing	Uncleanness	[Luke 4:33]
Christ Spirit supporting	Meekness	[1 Cor. 4:21]
Overcomer's Promise	White Clothes	[Rev. 3:5]
David's Doctrine	Proclaim God	[Psalm 51:13-17]
Jesus' Doctrine	Laying on of hands	[Heb. 6:1-2]
Apostle's Doctrine	Jesus – Minister of God	[Acts 2:22]
Unity Doctrine	One Hope of Calling	[Eph. 4:1-6]

The Ministry Context:

The Ministry Context is about ministering to Jesus' body, the Church. It's about showing Jesus' ministerial role, with respect to His people. It is about the rhema Word of Jesus, and its cleansing effect. It is about cleansing and healing those who seek God. It's about spiritual clothing. It's about being an under-shepherd for The Good Shepherd. It's about physically dealing one-on-one with Jesus' sheep. It's about valor through meekness. And, again, it's about how one speaks, as a minister of God.

This context has another side, which includes fleshly or outright demonic aspects. This concerns the juxtaposition of cleanliness with healing. To be healed, a wound must be cleaned. A healer with dirty hands can't do it. The problem in this Ministry context is uncleanness. And, spiritual uncleanness comes from the way one talks. Words can either raise up or put down, figuratively "killing" the hearer. What is in the heart comes out the mouth. If it's unclean, it defiles the speaker. And, it flows from a spirit of uncleanness.

	DOCTRINE CONTEXT	
Grace Gift	Teaching	[Rom. 12:6-8]
Character Trait	Knowledge	[2 Pet. 1:5-7]
Character Flaw	Worthless Dialoging	[Mat. 15:19]
Manifestation of Jesus	The Master - Teaching	[Mat. 23:8]
New Covenant	Teaching to “see” Jesus	[Heb. 8:10-12]
Holy Spirit Gift	Words of Knowledge	[1 Cor. 12:8-10]
Holy Spirit Work	Teaching	[1 Cor. 2:13]
Ministry	Teacher	[Eph. 4:11]
Ordination	Teacher	[1 Cor. 12:28]
Fellowship of ...	The Son	[1 Cor. 1:9]
Problem	Blindness	[Rev. 3:17]
Evil spirit opposing	Slumber	[Rom. 11:8]
Christ Spirit supporting	Revelation	[Eph. 1:17]
Overcomer’s Promise	Sit With Jesus	[Rev. 3:21]
David’s Doctrine	Bless the Church	[Psalm 51:18]
Jesus’ Doctrine	Doctrine of Baptisms	[Heb. 6:1-2]
Apostle’s Doctrine	Jesus – Master Teacher	[Acts 2:16-20]
Unity Doctrine	One Body	[Eph. 4:1-6]

The Doctrine Context:

The Doctrine Context is about what is taught to Jesus’ body, the Church. It’s about showing Jesus’ teaching role, with respect to His people. It is supposed to be a blessing to the Church. It is to bring the people to the point where they can “see” Jesus, in the sense of knowing all about Him, in His various roles. It includes all the baptisms, for remissions of sins, into His death, of the Holy Spirit, etc. It’s to be done by those knowledgeable in Jesus and of Jesus. It is to be done in the Spirit, who brings the word (logos) of knowledge. One should not presume to teach, since teachers receive the greater judgment. One should be sure of this calling.

This context has another side, which includes fleshly or outright demonic aspects. This concerns teachers who cannot “see.” They engage in worthless dialoging, flowing from a spirit of slumber, or ease. These are the ones who divide the Body, bringing named divisions, being denominations.

	MATURITY CONTEXT	
Grace Gift	Mercy	[Rom. 12:6-8]
Character Trait	Patience	[2 Pet. 1:5-7]
Character Flaw	Selling Self (Prostitution)	[Mat. 15:19]
Manifestation of Jesus	The Perfecter - Finishing	[Heb. 12:2]
New Covenant	God forgets our sins	[Heb. 8:10-12]
Holy Spirit Gift	Words of Wisdom	[1 Cor. 12:8-10]
Holy Spirit Work	Perfection (Maturity)	[Eph. 2:22]
Ministry	Apostle	[Eph. 4:11]
Ordination	Apostle	[1 Cor. 12:28]
Fellowship of ...	Affliction	[Heb. 10:33]
Problem	Weakness	[Rev. 3:8]
Evil spirit opposing	Infirmity	[Luke 13:11]
Christ Spirit supporting	Mouth of the Lord	[2 Ths. 2:8]
Overcomer's Promise	Pillar in Temple	[Rev. 3:12]
David's Doctrine	God's Pleasure	[Psalm 51:19]
Jesus' Doctrine	Maturity - Completion	[Heb. 6:1-2]
Apostle's Doctrine	Jesus - Conqueror	[Acts 2:34-35]
Unity Doctrine	One God and Father	[Eph. 4:1-6]

The Maturity Context:

The Maturity Context is about Completion. It's about the last phase. It's about what it takes to finish our duties on Earth. It's about Jesus in His role as Perfecter of the Church on Earth. It's about Jesus, as final Conqueror of death, the world, and Satan. It's about what it takes to give God pleasure. It's about recognition and admission that there is only one God and Father, and that Jesus is His only begotten Son. But, God the Father has many other "sons," whom Jesus has gotten into the family by adoption. One, for whom this is their context, is going to have to have mercy and patience, and that's with Christians. He or she is going to need the gift of the Spirit in words of wisdom, spoken in the Spirit, as though with the mouth of the Lord.

This context has another side, which includes fleshly or outright demonic aspects. This concerns those who would be latter-day apostles, selling themselves like prostitutes. Individuals working in the Maturity context will be under attack by spirits of infirmity. Corporately, the Mature Church will be weak. It is a fellowship of affliction. But, we are to hang on, until relieved. And, when we are relieved, it's gonna be a party.

CONCLUSION.

I have come to understand that the seven Christian contexts characterize both individual and corporate Christianity. That is, the Tables apply to both process and structure. They comprise a very useful tool for interpreting Christianity in general and churches, in particular. I have used this tool in other writings. It supports the organization of inquiry into Christian matters. It yields a way of viewing Christianity as a whole. Its utility stems from the fact that it is one hundred percent Bible-based. This tool has not been assembled to interpret the Bible. Rather, it has been assembled from the Bible, to interpret both Christianity and the world.

I cannot claim to have invented this tool. It was given to me by my Lord, Jesus Christ. And, it was given, shortly after my return to Christianity after a forty year absence. I believe that it was given, to equip me for some tasks the Lord wanted me to do. Making available to the Church this and similar writings seems to be part of those tasks.

My hope is that these materials will be of value to Christian ministers. For that reason, the material is not copyrighted and may be freely copied, in part or in whole.

John H. Painter
College Station, Texas